(c) what is the reaction of Gov-irnment in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI); ;a) to (c) Government are aware)f the news-item in question. Ac-. ■ording to information made avail ible by the State Government, a :ase has been registered under tin? J & K Officials Secrets Act in con-lection with missing maps referred in the news item. There is no proposal under consideration of the State Government for the posting if any officer to any sensitive assignment, ncluding any post in the office of Resi lent. Commissioner in Delhi, as mention-d in the report.

The other issues brought out in the report are of a general nature ind no specific details have been given. Hence it js not possib>e to jive any reply to the same.

Statement by Ministers on J&K

355. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MAL HOTRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state;

(a) whether *he* Union Ministers have been making controversial and contrary statements ovo, the affairs of the Jammu and Kashmir thereby ^ending wrong signals not only to \}w people of (he country but to the world;

(hi if so, the reasons for absence of cobesiveness in the utterances of the Union Ministers;

(c) the steps taken to check such uncalled for utterances by the Union Ministers; and

(d) the amount of damage that these utterances have caused to the Nation or are likely to cause in times to come?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI;; There have been imports from time (a) to (d) There hvae been] reports from time to time in the media about state-ments made by Union Ministers in respect of Jammu and Kashmir. It is not possible or feasible to give any comments in this regard, particularly since no specific instances or iastte have been cited in the question. Neither is it possible to give any facts or comments in respect of *uch issues as contained in part (d) of the question.

Handling of Kashmir affairs by Prime Minister

356. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

SHRI TR1LOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether Government's attention has been to the press reports to the effect that the Kashmir affairs will be handled by him direct, ly, if no what are the implications of this decision and the reasons for shifting the matter from the Home Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN HIE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): By a notification dated 1 November, 1094. a separate Department of Jamtnu and Kashmir Affairs has been created, with the Prime Minister as the Minister in-charge. The existing Kashmir Division in the Ministry of Home Affairs has been transferred to the news Department. 16 additional posts, including that of Joint Secretary with the requisite support staff, have also been created with a view to further strengthening the Department.

These steps would enable the Gov. ernment to devote focussed attention to the situation in the State.